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Bringing Concorde home



by Debby Thompson

ONE of the world's most admired and most distinctive aircraft may not even have got off the drawing board had it not been for the talents and the foresight of Brooklands Museum's founder patron.

Now the *News and Mail* is joining the campaign to bring Sir George Edwards' Concorde home to the county.

Sir George masterminded the concept of the supersonic aircraft and the collaboration between Britain and France in its development.

The first Anglo-French Supersonic Transport meeting was held in his office in British Aircraft Corporation's vast manufacturing works at Brooklands, Weybridge, in 1961.

And when Concorde went into production, more than 60 per cent of each aircraft was built at Brooklands, with major parts then transported to other sites for final assembly.

Now Brooklands Museum has launched a £1m campaign to bring Concorde home, both to mark Brooklands' place in history as the birthplace of British aviation and motorsport, and as a lasting memori-

al to the man who made it all possible.

When Concorde touched down for the final time last year, all serviceable Concorde were dispatched to new homes and Brooklands Museum thought its chance had been missed.

But one of two production test aircraft was discovered at Filton near Bristol and there were enough spares at various sites around the country to completely refit Concorde G-BBDG.

A bid was submitted to British Airways and a promise extracted that G-BBDG could return to its birthplace at Brooklands.

To get the supersonic jet home is going to take time, engineering ingenuity and money — £1 million to be precise.

Once the plane is restored to its former glory it will take pride of place at Brooklands

with full public access and will be the only Concorde in the South East.

Donations to the fundraising campaign have been going extremely well, said the man in charge of spearheading the appeal, Allan Winn, the museum's director.

In the short term the Museum Trust must raise £250,000 by May in order to begin the process of preparing Concorde for the 100-mile journey by road.

Mr Winn said: "Once we have Concorde on site we will begin the task of restoration that will make this historic aircraft the flagship of a breathtaking display of post-war Vickers and BAC transport and training aircraft.

"We are the only museum in the world that can bring such a collection together."

It is not just cold hard cash which would be useful for the appeal, Mr Winn is also hoping businesses will donate goods and services.

"We need everything from paint to dehumidifiers so that our growing army of volunteers can get on with the task," he said.

With the assistance of British Airways Engineering, Brooklands already has much of the necessary ground equipment and tooling for the project, and the majority of parts originally thought to be missing from the airframe have been tracked down and transported to the museum. The team has also built up a good set of spares.

Mr Winn said: "This will be the only Concorde in the South East of England, Britain's most populous region, that the public will be able to board and enjoy a fan-



Steve Devereux engineer at Brooklands Museum with a Concorde engine received last month.

tastic supersonic experience. "We will make it as close to the real thing as possible and, for corporate events, it will truly break new ground."

Already one local company has grasped the opportunity to help. Cranleigh-based IT support services firm 9380 Computer Systems was the first corporate sponsor to step forward.

It has given a commitment to the project to audit, service and maintain all the computers and peripheral equipment at the museum. It will use a state of the art

scheme."

Mr Winn added: "It is the generosity of individuals that is particularly exciting."

"I was delighted to receive a cheque from our royal patron, Prince Michael of Kent. The enthusiasm of all our friends is inspirational."

"We now need a wider public to get behind this thrilling project that will be a major coup for Surrey."

To contact Allan Winn or to pledge support call 01932 857381 or e-mail allanwinn@brooklandsmuseum.com



Allan Winn, Brooklands Museum director.



The nose section of Concorde arriving at Brooklands Museum in January.

Delta Golf update
Concorde appeal
See facing page for Brooklands Concorde target update. Find out how to put your name on a wheel or seat and fill out a gift aid declaration form.

